

UK Parliamentary Election
Midlothian County Constituency
Thursday 4 July 2024
Administrative Arrangements for Candidates and Agents

1 The Returning Officer and the Election Office

The Returning Officer is Dr Grace Vickers, however, the day to day running of the Election will be carried out by Gill Smith, Elections Officer (and Depute Returning Officer) and Alan Turpie, Legal and Governance Manager (and Depute Returning Officer).

The UK General Election for the Midlothian County Constituency will be administered from the Election Office, Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN.

Telephone No - 0131 271 3365

Email - elections@midlothian.gov.uk

Web – www.midlothian.gov.uk/elections

The office is open Mondays to Thursdays from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm and 10.00 am to 3.30 pm on Fridays.

Additionally, please note that the office will be open on the day of the poll (Thursday 4 July 2024) from 7.00 am to 10.00 pm.

If you wish to meet either the Returning Officer or her Depute Returning Officers you are advised to telephone in advance.

2 Electoral Registration Officer

Enquiries relating to (a) entitlement to vote by post/proxy and (b) the register of electors should be addressed to the Electoral Registration Officer, Lothian Valuation Joint Board and Joint Electoral Committee, 17A South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9FL.

Telephone No - 0131 344 2500

Email – enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk

Web - www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk

3 Delivery of Nomination Papers

Uplift of paper copies of the Nomination Forms (and the Nomination Pack) can be made from the Election Office from Monday 3 June 2024 and the delivery of nomination papers made from Monday 3 June 2024 to Friday 7 June 2024 at 4.00 pm. The Election Office will be open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm each day for this purpose.

Please note that it is a legal requirement that the Nomination Paper, Home Address Form and Consent to Nomination Form must be delivered by hand to the Election Office and not, for example, handed in at the Reception Desk at Midlothian House.

Candidates are strongly advised to return their nomination papers (including party authorisation for an emblem and party description) well in advance of the closing deadline – Friday 7 June 2024 at 4pm - in order that any problems arising from their nomination form can be resolved.

4 Email

In regard to the use of email, please note that:-

- (a) emails **will not** be accepted for lodging a candidate's nomination paper or a notice of appointment of election agent; and
- (b) emails **will** be accepted for giving notice of appointment of postal, counting and polling agents.

5 Candidate's Deposits

With regard to candidate's deposits, the Returning Officer will accept payment (£500.00) by a banker's draft or certified cheque provided she is satisfied that the drawer carries on business as a banker in the United Kingdom. Drafts and cheques should be made payable to "Midlothian Council".

Electronic Payment of the deposit by BACS or CHAPS is also acceptable but payments must arrive in the Council's Bank Account by Thursday 6 June 2024. Payments are only allowed with the consent of the Returning Officer and her pre-authorisation is required before the transaction is made. In addition, the name and address of the person making the payment must be given to her. Payments should be made to:

*Midlothian Council
Royal Bank of Scotland
63 High Street
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 1JA*

*Sort Code 83 17 26
Account No. 00128363
Account Name - General Fund Account
Please also use the reference – "Election Deposit + your surname" - eg – "Election Deposit – Smith"*

Debit and Credit Cards are acceptable – Payment must be made as part of the process of the delivery of nomination papers and not later than 4.00pm on the day before nominations close - **ie not later than Thursday 6 June 2024 at 4pm.**

6 Briefing for Candidates and their Election Agents

There will be no formal Briefing Meeting for Candidates and their Election Agents at the start of the election period. However, the Returning Officer and her staff are available for 'one to one' briefings on the election procedures and processes by appointment.

In regard to the Count, a Briefing Meeting will be held on Wednesday

3 July 2024 at the Count Hall in The Lasswade Centre. Invites will be sent out nearer the event.

7 Notice of Election, Notice of Poll, etc

Enclosed in the Nomination Pack for your information are a copy of the formal Notice of Election and a copy of the "Scheme of Polling Arrangements on Polling Day".

The Notice of Poll/Statement of Persons Nominated (which will include at Part 2 the "*Situation of Polling Stations and Descriptions of Voters Entitled to Vote therein*") will be forwarded to you following the close of nominations on Thursday 7 July 2024.

Midlothian County Constituency Area

A map showing the whole constituency area (which is the same as the Midlothian Council area) and also the six electoral wards that it comprises is enclosed in the Nomination Pack and is also available on the Council's web site at www.midlothian.gov.uk/elections

8 Statutory Provisions Re Schools and Rooms for General Election 2024

A copy of the provisions and the statutory list of rooms available for meetings are enclosed in the nomination pack.

9 Campaign Posters

Please be aware that Midlothian Council has a Policy of not permitting the attachment of Posters to Council owned Street Lighting Columns and Street Furniture, etc

The Council will, if necessary, remove offending items displayed on its non domestic property.

Please consult the '*Notes for Agents on Polling Procedures*' issued with polling agents cards which sets the rules for displaying political posters outside polling places on polling day and also for wearing rosettes (in the Polling Place, but not the polling station).

In addition, Transport Scotland has advised that the display of Advertisements on Trunk Roads is not permitted.

10 Notice of the Opening of Postal Ballot Boxes and Envelopes

All the postal vote application signatures and dates of births in the postal vote statements in the returned postal ballot packs will be electronically verified. Each opening will commence at 10.00 am in the Committee Room, Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1DN. (Please note that the final openings will be held at the venue where the Count will take place –details to follow.)

The first opening is provisionally scheduled to take place on Friday 21 June 2024 (provided postal votes have been returned by that date).

If any postal vote statement adjudication is required to be done by the Returning Officer or her Depute appointed for that purpose, it will take place at 4.00 pm each postal opening day except on a Friday when it will take place at 3.30p. On Polling Day it will be carried out on an ongoing basis.

Note: Ballot Papers are not being adjudicated or counted by candidate at the postal pack openings.

Candidates and Agents are reminded that “political campaigners” are not permitted to handle postal votes other than their own or that of a close family member or someone they provide care for.

Formal notification of the postal openings and details of the appointment of agent(s) to attend the postal openings will be issued separately.

11 Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents

The appointment of polling and counting agents may be made by the Candidate or the Election Agent.

Notice of the appointments requires to be given to the Returning Officer in writing, stating the names and addresses of the persons appointed and can be submitted in hard copy or by email to: elections@midlothian.gov.uk.

(For convenience the relevant forms which you may wish to use to make the various appointments are enclosed in the Nomination Pack and are also available for download on the Council's Election website.)

There is no restriction on the numbers of polling agents to be appointed but not more than one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same permitted participant.

In regard to Counting Agents the number to be allowed for each Candidate is provisionally 12 but the Returning Officer will determine the final allocation after the close of nominations and advise Agents accordingly.

In addition, each Candidate is entitled to nominate one person as his/her guest to attend the Count but that person has no legal status in the proceedings. The name and address of the guest should be entered on the counting agent form.

Notice of appointments must be given to the Returning Officer **not later than 27 June 2024.**

12 Uplift/Posting of Poll and Count Cards

In regard to the poll and count admission cards, please state on the appropriate forms a contact name and telephone number of who will be available to collect the cards from the Election Office at Midlothian House, 40-46, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN.

13 The Count

The verification of the ballot paper accounts and the subsequent counting of ballot papers will commence on Thursday 4 July 2024 at 10pm at The Lasswade Centre, Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian, EH19 2LA.

Count Accreditation Cards will be issued with the Midlothian '*Count Booklet*' which will contain full details of the count method, venue facilities, count rules, etc.

Please note that further information/guidance is available for candidates and agents on the Electoral Commission Website -

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent>

**Dr Grace Vickers
Returning Officer**

31 May 2024

If you wish clarification of any point in regard to the UK Midlothian County Constituency Election, please do not hesitate to contact either the Returning Officer or the Depute Returning Officer on 0131 271 3365.

